

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Elastic Therapy Inc

North Carolina Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Elastic Therapy, Inc. Spins 5S into Leg Wear

Client Profile:

Elastic Therapy, Inc. (ETI) a private label medical compression hosiery company located in Asheboro, North Carolina, produces anti-embolism stockings, sheer products, surgical weight stockings and a variety of men's and women's socks, of various compression levels. One of their newest products include leg wear for those suffering from diabetes. The company employs 250 people.

Situation:

ETI had lost a major account and sales were down approximately 3 percent from projections. The company wanted to increase productivity and contacted the North Carolina State University (NCSU) Industrial Extension Service (IES), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

ETI reported exceptional value based on Lean training consisting of an on-site training session as well as a safety audit, both facilitated by extension specialists at IES. IES facilitated on-site Lean training and a safety audit. Through these events, ETI saw first hand the benefits of implementing Lean tools. IES also arranged a visit to an award-winning Lean facility. This inspired ETI to begin a Lean journey. NCSU Lean specialists, Jim Kurian and Anthony Smith, delivered an on-site Lean 100 with factory simulation including 5S (Sort, Straighten, Shine, Standardize, Sustain) implementation. ETI began the Lean process by focusing on developing an entire cell into a very condensed area. "We found everything but the kitchen sink in there," said Bryan Trogdon, ETI's process improvement engineer. Now, everything has its 'place,' which is designated using a brightly colored masking tape applied to a location on the plant floor. As a result of IES's assistance, ETI has seen improvements in productivity, inventory control, and cost savings.

Results:

- * Estimated increased sales of \$1.5 million.
- * Anticipated cost savings of \$385,000.
- * Achieved cost avoidance of \$100,000.
- * Reduced downtime by 32 percent.

Testimonial:

"We have been able to keep our operating/manufacturing costs flat, and at times lower than last year, which is a very good sign, since we have begun to implement Lean thinking and principles into our manufacturing."

Bryan Trogdon, Process Improvement Engineer

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